

## **GENESIS: Where Grace Begins**

### **The Testing of the Ten – Genesis 42**

#### **Context: Joseph in Charge**

<sup>41</sup> And Pharaoh said to Joseph, “See, I have set you over all the land of Egypt.” <sup>42</sup> Then Pharaoh took his signet ring from his hand and put it on Joseph’s hand, and clothed him in garments of fine linen and put a gold chain about his neck. <sup>43</sup> And he made him ride in his second chariot. And they called out before him, “Bow the knee!” Thus he set him over all the land of Egypt.

#### **Genesis 41:41-43**

By the end of Genesis 41, there is no doubt that Joseph had great AUTHORITY in Egypt.

He was 30 years old (Gen. 41:46). So, he had been in Egypt for 13 years. (Gen. 37:2)

After Joseph interpreted Pharaoh's dream, the king told him, “See, I have set you over all the land of Egypt.” (Gen. 41:41). He made Joseph his second in command (41:43) and gave him a new name (*Zaphenath-paneah*, meaning “God speaks and lives.”) and a wife (41:45).

The entire operation of saving Egypt from famine was entrusted to Joseph. For the next 7 years, Joseph prepared for what was to come. When the famine hit with severity and the people cried out that Pharaoh for food, he told them, “Go to Joseph. What he says to you, do.” (41:55).

As Chapter 41 concludes, the famine had spread far beyond Egypt's borders (“the famine was severe over all the earth”) and now is affecting the entire region where his family lived.

We now shift our attention from Egypt to Canaan. 20 years have passed since we've heard anything from the family of Jacob. But even though the years have been silent, God has been at work in incredible ways.

The family salvation from terrible famine was already in place in the person Joseph. Imagine that 20-year journey that would lead to their salvation! In ways they could never have imagined, God was keeping his covenant promise.

#### **Don't just stand there – Go to Egypt!**

<sup>42</sup> When Jacob learned that there was grain for sale in Egypt, he said to his sons, “Why do you look at one another?” <sup>2</sup> And he said, “Behold, I have heard that there is grain for sale in Egypt. Go down and buy grain for us there, that we may live and not die.” <sup>3</sup> So ten of Joseph’s brothers went down to buy grain in Egypt. <sup>4</sup> But Jacob did not send Benjamin, Joseph’s brother, with his brothers, for he feared that harm might happen to him. <sup>5</sup> Thus the sons of Israel came to buy among the others who came, for the famine was in the land of Canaan.

#### **Genesis 42:1-5**

“For us” ... Jacob had many people to provide for. Later in the story, when Joseph brings his family to be with him in Egypt, there are at least 70 people who come.

Jacob didn't send Benjamin. Why?

#### **The Testing of the Ten Brothers, Part 1:**

<sup>6</sup> Now Joseph was governor over the land. He was the one who sold to all the people of the land. And Joseph’s brothers came and bowed themselves before him with their faces to the ground. <sup>7</sup> Joseph saw his brothers and recognized them, but he treated them like strangers and spoke roughly to them. “Where do you come from?” he said. They said, “From the land of Canaan, to buy food.” <sup>8</sup> And Joseph recognized his brothers, but they did not recognize him. <sup>9</sup> And Joseph remembered the dreams that he had dreamed of them. And he said to them, “You are spies; you have come to see the nakedness of the land.” <sup>10</sup> They said to him, “No, my lord, your servants have come to buy food. <sup>11</sup> We are all sons of one man. We are honest men. Your servants have never been spies.”

<sup>12</sup> He said to them, “No, it is the nakedness of the land that you have come to see.” <sup>13</sup> And they said, “We, your servants, are twelve brothers, the sons of one man in the land of Canaan, and behold, the youngest is this day

with our father, and one is no more.”<sup>14</sup> But Joseph said to them, “It is as I said to you. You are spies.<sup>15</sup> By this you shall be tested: by the life of Pharaoh, you shall not go from this place unless your youngest brother comes here.<sup>16</sup> Send one of you, and let him bring your brother, while you remain confined, that your words may be tested, whether there is truth in you. Or else, by the life of Pharaoh, surely you are spies.”<sup>17</sup> And he put them all together in custody for three days.

<sup>18</sup> On the third day Joseph said to them, “Do this and you will live, for I fear God:<sup>19</sup> if you are honest men, let one of your brothers remain confined where you are in custody, and let the rest go and carry grain for the famine of your households,<sup>20</sup> and bring your youngest brother to me. So your words will be verified, and you shall not die.” And they did so.

<sup>21</sup> Then they said to one another, “In truth we are guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the distress of his soul, when he begged us and we did not listen. That is why this distress has come upon us.”<sup>22</sup> And Reuben answered them, “Did I not tell you not to sin against the boy? But you did not listen. So now there comes a reckoning for his blood.”<sup>23</sup> They did not know that Joseph understood them, for there was an interpreter between them.

### **Genesis 42:6-23**

Why didn't they recognize Joseph?

What was Joseph doing?

What was Joseph trying to determine?

What was the effect of Joseph's treatment on his brothers?

In all of this, what was Joseph's attitude toward his brothers?

<sup>24</sup> Then he turned away from them and wept. And he returned to them and spoke to them. And he took Simeon from them and bound him before their eyes.

### **Genesis 42:24**

#### **The Testing of the Ten Brothers, Part 2:**

<sup>25</sup> And Joseph gave orders to fill their bags with grain, and to replace every man's money in his sack, and to give them provisions for the journey. This was done for them.

<sup>26</sup> Then they loaded their donkeys with their grain and departed.<sup>27</sup> And as one of them opened his sack to give his donkey fodder at the lodging place, he saw his money in the mouth of his sack.<sup>28</sup> He said to his brothers, “My money has been put back; here it is in the mouth of my sack!” At this their hearts failed them, and they turned trembling to one another, saying, “What is this that God has done to us?”

<sup>29</sup> When they came to Jacob their father in the land of Canaan, they told him all that had happened to them, saying,<sup>30</sup> “The man, the lord of the land, spoke roughly to us and took us to be spies of the land.<sup>31</sup> But we said to him, ‘We are honest men; we have never been spies.’<sup>32</sup> We are twelve brothers, sons of our father. One is no more, and the youngest is this day with our father in the land of Canaan.’<sup>33</sup> Then the man, the lord of the land, said to us, ‘By this I shall know that you are honest men: leave one of your brothers with me, and take grain for the famine of your households, and go your way.’<sup>34</sup> Bring your youngest brother to me. Then I shall know that you are not spies but honest men, and I will deliver your brother to you, and you shall trade in the land.’ ”

<sup>35</sup> As they emptied their sacks, behold, every man's bundle of money was in his sack. And when they and their father saw their bundles of money, they were afraid. <sup>36</sup> And Jacob their father said to them, "You have bereaved me of my children: Joseph is no more, and Simeon is no more, and now you would take Benjamin. All this has come against me." <sup>37</sup> Then Reuben said to his father, "Kill my two sons if I do not bring him back to you. Put him in my hands, and I will bring him back to you." <sup>38</sup> But he said, "My son shall not go down with you, for his brother is dead, and he is the only one left. If harm should happen to him on the journey that you are to make, you would bring down my gray hairs with sorrow to Sheol."

#### **Genesis 42:24**

What is ironic in this story?

What did the brothers leave out of their re-telling to Jacob?

Why did Joseph bind and imprison Simeon?

Why did Joseph plant the money?

Do you notice anything different about the brothers?

#### **7 Critical Lessons (so far):**

There is no timeline on God's JUSTICE and JUDGMENT.

BURYING our sins keeps us BOUND to them.

Godly FEAR is a result of God's GRACE.

A recognition of PERSONAL GUILT is the first – but just the first – step on the path of REDEMPTION.

BROKENNESS and RESTORATION are prerequisites for God's BLESSING in our lives.

God is still SOVEREIGN, and ...

Jesus is a far better SAVIOR than we are SINNERS.

*Next week: Genesis 43-44 – The Final Test*